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ABSTRACT

With the passage of legislation providing financial rewards for merit schools, the Dade County Public Schools and the United Teachers of Dade negotiated a program, now known as the Quality Instruction Incentives Plan (QIIP), designed to recognize significant improvements in student physical and academic achievement. The success of QIIP initiated a movement in 1985 to professionalize teaching and led to the development of expanded faculty-administration cooperation in the management of schools. Programs devised and currently in operation under the new school management and decisionmaking effort include the unique restructuring of 12 school environments and their curriculums to confront high dropout rates, Saturday Morning School that combines traditional instruction with computer games and music education, and company/school cooperation in running and maintaining satellite learning centers. The full potential of the Professionalization of Teaching movement in the Dade County Public Schools has yet to be realized; each year new initiatives are begun and old ones are changed or expanded in the effort to improve school quality. (KM)

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Brief

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A Unique Labor-Management Partnership Has Made Dade County Public Schools a Model in Education Reform

by Donna St. John

If someone had suggested that students would be interested in coming to school on Saturdays, it's unlikely that anyone would have believed it. School on Saturdays? Unheard of. But when the offer was made to 50 students at Drew Elementary School in Miami, Fla., more than 200 decided to pass up "Pee Wee's Playhouse" and showed up for class.

Saturday Morning School is but one of several innovative programs to spring from a unique, nonadversarial partnership between the Dade County Public Schools and the United Teachers of Dade. It is a partnership built on trust and cooperation, where both union and management function as equal partners, with the mutual goal of improving the school system in Dade County, Fla.

By 1970, Florida had grown from the 20th to the 9th most populous state. Miami, with a history of boom and bust, and surrounding Dade County were accustomed to economic and social upheaval. But Miami began to witness a continual influx of emigres, many with little or no knowledge of English, and incidents of racial unrest polarized the city. These conditions, coupled with the biggest building boom in Miami's history, have forever changed the image of this city of the future.

The multi-ethnic challenge and see-sawing economy had a tremendous impact on all of Dade County, but no less so than on its public schools. The student population grew by more than 10,000—to 254,000—by 1987. Serious overcrowding, low student achievement scores, high drop-out rates, and a teachers' shortage presented additional challenges to an already overburdened school system. The methods then in place for dealing with these problems didn't seem to be working. But a number of events and developments made the Dade County Public Schools ripe for experimentation in education reform.

With certification of the teachers' union in the '70s, the groundwork was laid for joint problem-solving, and the establishment of a joint labor-management task force on "professionalizing" teaching became the springboard for a series of joint initiatives. Coupled with efforts to respond to the reports on education reform and legislation establishing financial rewards for merit schools led to perhaps the most radical reform of all—School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making. This grassroots process meant that teachers and school administrators have a say in how schools are run, how teachers teach, and how students learn.

This experiment in providing greater autonomy for teachers and principals has led to a series of revolutionary changes in Dade County Public Schools, the results of which are benefiting not only students and teachers but also the community. The Dade County public school system has become a national model in education reform.

THE FOUNDATIONS FOR REFORM

With more than a quarter of a million students and an annual budget of $1.2 billion, the Dade County Public School System is the fourth largest in the nation. Representing some 118 countries, the student body is approximately 40-to-45 percent Hispanic and 25 percent black. More than 25,000 full-time staff are employed in the school system, 15,000 of whom are teachers represented by the United Teachers of Dade (UTD).

The turning point in relations between the school administration and teachers grew out of a 1968 teachers' strike. The three-week, statewide protest—against the governor and state legislature—concerned a serious underfunding of public schools. At that time, the Classroom Teachers Association, a professional group representing teachers' interests, had been informally recognized by the School Board for some 20 years.

As a result of the strike, several teachers filed suit with the Dade County Circuit Court over the fact that the union had been recognized as the sole collective bargaining agent for teachers, even though all of them had not agreed to representation. The Court issued an injunction against both the School Board and the union.

The union appealed the decision to the Florida State Supreme Court, which reversed the lower court's ruling. The higher court held that public employees had the same collective bargaining rights as private-sector workers (except the right to strike). The Court then directed the state government to pass legislation permitting collective bargaining for public employees. It was not until several years later—1974—that the legislature passed a bill which provided collective bargaining rights for public employees throughout the state.

UTD was the first union to request certification, filing jointly with the Dade

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County School Board. The petition was uncontested, and the union was certified in 1975. This action was to mark the beginning of the formal, noncontroversial relationship between the school administration and the union, a relationship that continues today.

The leadership of the Classroom Teachers Association continued to direct UTD upon certification. The first contract, effective in December 1975, essentially incorporated existing School Board rules which had been in place prior to formal recognition. But there was one notable exception: The agreement included the establishment of task forces to discuss issues not specifically covered in the contract.

Pat Tornillo, Jr., Executive Vice President of UTD, noted, "It was the first time that both the union and management were sitting down together over a period of time to address difficult issues." And this first joint union-management task force set the stage for expanding future cooperative efforts and shared decision-making.

The second contract continued with what was to be a series of reforms and included the establishment of faculty councils in every school. These councils, which functioned like quality circles, served as advisory groups to the school administration. Principals and designated teachers elected by their peers had a vehicle for resolving problems of mutual concern by meeting, discussing, and resolving issues.

This unusual, nonadversarial approach to union-management relations was not due specifically to the outcome of the teachers' strike. Tornillo insists it was partly the result of the trust that had built over a period of time, as well as to the commitment of the leadership—both union and management—who conveyed that commitment to their respective organizations.

Frank Petruzielo, Associate Superintendent of Dade County Public Schools, is in agreement on why Dade County was ripe for such joint labor-management cooperation. He believes it grew out of "the continuity of leadership, the number of people on the management side and then, of course, on the union side, who have seen eye-to-eye, who have agreed on the importance of maintaining a cooperative spirit over the years."

Petruzielo is emphatic in attributing much of the success of Dade County's educational reforms to a long history of labor-management cooperation within the school system. The commitment to mutual trust, combined with visionary leadership from the School Board and the UTD, has made the county's schools an ideal laboratory for experimentation. To successfully change a school system, Petruzielo believes that a positive, mutually supportive, labor relations climate must exist to encourage people to take action for lasting and meaningful change.

Much of this cooperative climate grew from the excellent working relationships nurtured over many years by various school superintendents and union leaders. Their philosophy, and one that is shared by the School Board, has been to work as partners, not adversaries, to achieve common goals. This philosophy has grown from an organizational policy goal to become a basic tenet of the county's educational system. It has provided the impetus to convert a labor relations process into dramatic educational improvements.

While faculty councils were jointly solving problems of mutual concern, other events were taking place that also had an impact on the cooperative effort.

RECOGNIZING QUALITY SCHOOLS

In 1984, the District Meritorious School Program was passed by the state legislature, providing financial rewards for "quality schools" that could demonstrate improvements in student achievement, both academic and physical.

Once the legislation was passed, the school system and the union promptly

The Quality Instruction Incentives Program—How It Works

With the passage of legislation providing financial rewards for "merit" schools, the Dade County Public Schools and UTD negotiated a plan now known as the Quality Instruction Incentives Program (QUIIP). QUIIP is designed to recognize significant improvements in student achievement, both academic and physical.

Each school, as well as each teacher, votes on participation in the program. When QUIIP was first introduced, more than 75 percent of schools chose to participate, with the approval of at least a two-thirds majority of all faculty members. Of the 243 schools then eligible for the program, all but 11 chose to join.

Each individual school's plan, developed by a council of school employees, is evaluated and approved by a QUIIP Committee made up of equal numbers of UTD and Dade County Public Schools representatives. The committee, co-chaired by a member of each organization, also administers the program on a daily basis. The State Department of Education grants final approval.

In developing plans, schools are free to focus on whatever areas they determine should have a high priority, based on that school's special needs. In elementary schools, most plans focus on basic skills, especially communication. Geography and culture have been targeted in junior high schools. In senior high schools, efforts are concentrated on reading skills, geography, writing, and math.

At the end of the school year, the results of each school's efforts are evaluated to determine the gains in student achievement since the previous year, based on Stanford Achievement Test results. Because the focus is on both intellectual and physical development, students also must have a participation rate of at least 80 percent in the Presidential Fitness Test and must have maintained or exceeded the participation rate of the previous year.

Selection of schools is a two-step process. Schools that show a dramatic improvement in student achievement are selected in the first "Quality" round. Of these schools, those schools that have developed the most outstanding projects to improve student achievement are selected as "Educational Excellence" schools. A panel of prominent Dade County citizens judges the special projects, selecting those that have had the most impact on students.

The School Board also has approved funds for a companion program—QUIIP-SC, for "special centers." These schools are ineligible for QUIIP because they don't compile the required test data on which QUIIP criteria are based, such as alternative schools, exceptional education centers, and vocational, adult, and community schools.

Awards are made "Academy award-style" each October at a special luncheon attended by members of the school administration, union, and community and business groups. The entire school staff has a share in the financial rewards—teachers, administrators, aides, secretaries, cafeteria workers, and custodians.

Apart from the improvement in the schools' instructional programs, QUIIP has resulted in other benefits. Morale has increased among teachers and administrators, as well as among the nonprofessional staff who have been made to feel they are part of the program and can share in the financial rewards.

During the 1987–88 school year, more than 69 schools participated in QUIIP. Employees received a share (up to $1,140) of the $3.2 million set aside for Dade County by the state legislature. Since the program began, employees of Dade County Public Schools have shared more than $16.9 million in QUIIP funds.

Photo Courtesy of Dade County Public Schools

negotiated a plan, now known as the Quality Instruction Incentives Program (QUIIP). With the unanimous approval of the Dade County Public Schools, UTD and the School Board, QUIIP came into being. It was the first formal cooperative program that was applied throughout the county and the first such plan ever to be included in a teachers' contract.

While recognizing schools of merit, QUIIP also gave teachers the opportunity to create new learning programs for their students.

Paul Bell, Deputy Superintendent of Education and co-chair of the QUIIP committee, says that when the faculty and administration jointly plan for education improvement in the school, it is the highest level of professional involvement. QUIIP, therefore, moved the school system one step further in "professionalizing" teaching and involving teachers in the day-to-day operation of schools.

THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF TEACHING

Based on the successes of the faculty councils and QUIIP, in 1985 the Joint Task Force on the Professionalization of Teaching was formed to further the positive environment of cooperation throughout the district. Senior managers and union representatives discussed ways of professionalizing teaching, improving the workplace, improving teachers' salaries and benefits, and improving the public's perception of teachers, as well as teachers' perception of teachers.

The Task Force was co-chaired by Leonard Britton, then Superintendent of Schools, and Tornillo. Together, they visited schools throughout the county in an effort to sell their ideas to administrators, teachers, and parents. Says Tornillo, "We wanted to show everyone in the school system how important the two of us felt what we were talking about was."

Under the direction of the Task Force, new programs involving both union and administration personnel began in rapid succession. The bargaining and joint problem-solving became a process not only for solving mutual problems but also for initiating positive change.

While the goals of the Task Force were gaining acceptance, the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy issued "The Report on the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession." Several recommendations—some then considered quite radical—attracted national attention. Among them were:

- Upgrading teaching as a profession,
- Raising salaries based on competence rather than tenure,
- Providing more autonomy for individual schools, with the involvement of teachers,
- Restructuring schools to make teaching more effective and rewarding, and
- Encouraging minorities to enter the teaching profession.

Both the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and UTD issued similar reforms shortly after the release of the Carnegie Report. These reports also explored some of the same issues as the Carnegie Report and made similar recommendations.

The Carnegie Report was studied by educators throughout the country. But in Dade County, coupled with the AFT and the UTD reports, it provided additional motivation for continuing to search for new ways to deal with the problems in the school system.

The Professionalization of Teaching Task Force expanded its efforts to address some of the reports' recommendations, and the next union contract included a plan which created specific assignments to explore these issues in greater depth. The Professionalization of Teaching movement, which had its seeds planted in the mid-70s, continued to evolve.

The "professionalization" concept, says Petruzielo, "is a bottom-up type of philosophy involving people—not only teachers, but people at the workplace being involved in the day-to-day operation of the school." He also believes the professionalization movement is largely the evolutionary result of the earlier attempts by union and management to work together to solve problems through faculty councils, QUIIP, and the Task Force's efforts. Says Petruzielo, the movement has led to "... a commitment on the part of both parties to professionalize the workforce so that a better educational product can be delivered, and so the children of Dade County can be the recipients of a better education ..."

THE KEYSTONE OF REFORM

The continued success of QUIIP brought with it a strengthening of relations between the Dade County Public Schools and UTD. And it was one of the factors leading to the development of the School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making (SBM/SDM) concept—the centerpiece of the "professionalization movement" in Dade County. Because earlier contracts had established a faculty council in each school which acted as an advisor to the principal, shared decision-making seemed to be an inevitable extension of the cooperative effort.

The process expands faculty-administration cooperation in the management of schools in a revolutionary way. Stated simply, SBM/SDM allows teachers and principals to develop their own system for the total management of their individual schools, with minimum direction from higher authority. Rigid policies, programs, and procedures can be eliminated or modified, giving school staffs greater flexibility to meet the special needs of students in their community. The goal is to achieve the best education possible through the best use of resources.

Joseph Fernandez, current Superintendent of Schools, describes the philosophy behind the concept: "The whole idea is for the practitioners—the people out in the field—to tell us what's good for the students. It's the classroom teachers who know what kids need. It's time to let them try things that they think will work."

Participation in the pilot effort was voluntary but required a two-thirds vote of the teachers. Each school developed a joint decision-making structure and established a governing body, as well as a means of evaluating the results of their goals.

One crucial aspect of SBM/SDM is that there will be no additional funding provided to the participating schools. The experiment must succeed as a result of cooperation of all school employees—not by throwing more money at a problem. Each school is given a budget allocation based on allotments per student, depending on whether the school is an elementary or a high school, or for special education, gifted, or vocational education students.

Schools then have total control over their budgets and make decisions on how the school will be run—from the number of teachers, the selection of textbooks, and class content, to the size, duration, and number of classes. Schools also have the flexibility to use funds for other purposes, such as special equipment and even the hiring of special teachers.

Although this program began only in the 1987–88 school year as a four-year experiment, the concept had been building for a number of years. Thomas Cerra, Associate Superintendent of Schools, says, "There's been a series, one building on the previous program—in an effort to improve the achievement levels and make the school a more productive one."

Of 279 schools, 60 volunteered to participate and 53 actually submitted proposals. Thirty-three proposals were accepted by a task force of administrators, teachers and union representatives. The proposals needed further review to determine if it would be necessary to obtain contract waivers or changes in school board policy. Approximately 100 waivers from labor contract provisions, School Board rules, and State Department of Education rules have been granted. Both the administrators and the union have been willing to take risks in pursuing these waivers in order to ensure success of the program.

Some of the proposals were quite revolutionary. But as Fernandez explained, "The instructions to schools were very simple. We told them the sky's the limit. We had to get them to believe that we were serious...about moving out all the impediments that we had in place."

Says Merri Mann, Professional Issues Coordinator of UTD, ". . . if we really are talking about empowering teachers, and giving the teachers the opportunity to determine the kinds of conditions that they're going to work under, then we have to mean what we say, and give them the opportunity to try something that they want to try."

One school proposed that extra classes be taught beyond the number stipulated in the contract and without additional pay, if class sizes would be reduced. Another proposed to redesign the Spanish curriculum by providing instruction to students in grades 2 through 6. One school wanted to hire special teachers for art and music. An inner-city school with a high rate of drop-outs and student suicides wanted to revise the daily schedule to allow one-hour counseling sessions for students.

The School Board, superintendent, and top UTD officials further removed any obstacles by assuring participants that mistakes would be permitted in this pilot program.

"We have told people that there are going to be some failures," says Fernandez. "We wanted that because we didn't want to in any way deter them from thinking, from creating. We wanted to remove that threat from hanging over their heads." And he urged those schools choosing to participate: "Don't be afraid. Try it. Go with it."

This attitude provided additional incentives for those involved to work harder for success. Any shortcomings would not be regarded as failures but lessons learned that would pave the way for future successes.

Evaluation, however, is built into the process, says Joseph Tekerman, Executive Director, Office of the Deputy Superintendent for Administration. "We know that there are things in shared-based management that are going to work. And there are going to be some that are not going to work."

". . . We're not leaving anything to chance," adds Fernandez. "If we see something that is not working, we can go in and try to correct it. Let's not continue like we often do in education: We put things in, and we leave them there whether they're good or not."

Some employees are, nevertheless, wary of SBM/SDM and are waiting for the results of the experiment to see if it really works. Because the process requires a redefinition of roles, many have expressed concerns about such changes. Some supervisors feel that their authority will be compromised and don't want to alter the status quo. Some teachers are opposed because of the additional time required. Gerald Dreyfuss, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, says, "Some people (aren't) ready for change. Some are not ready to be innovative; a lot of people like to wait and see what happens before they try it."

But based on the first pilot's success, SBM/SDM has been extended to a second group of schools who have voted to participate. Planning is now underway at 50 schools for implementation in the 1989–90 school year.

At the end of the experiment, student test scores, attendance rates, and disciplinary actions will be reviewed and evaluated, as well as teacher and student response. The results will be published in mid-1990. But no one doubts the success of the effort so far. Morale is high among both students and teachers, as well as parents. And in some cases, students are actually transferring from private schools to the public school system.

Tornillo confirms that view. "(SBM/SDM) is right for the future of the school system. It's an idea that will be very difficult to hold back, not just in Dade County, but nationwide. We are convinced that kids are going to get a better education when the decisions that affect them are made in the schools they're attending, by the people who are there in the classroom."

Partners in Education

SBM/SDM was already in place at all schools expressing interest when a new initiative was introduced—one designed to reduce dropout rates and improve academic achievement. This five-year experiment, known as Partners in Education (PIE), was launched in 12 schools during the 1987–88 school year.

A guiding force behind PIE was T. Willard Fairs, Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Greater Miami. Like other urban centers, Dade County was experiencing alarmingly high dropout rates. Although the rate had been declining more recently—down to 24 percent (against a national average of 30 percent)—Fairs felt the rate was still too high and appealed to the school administration to confront the problem.

The proposed solution was a unique one—for several reasons. The program is similar in approach to SBM/SDM, but PIE corrals the energy and expertise of the Dade County Public Schools, UTD, the Urban League of Greater Miami, Miami-Dade Community College-Mitchell Wolfson, Sr., Foundation, as well as parents.

Each school voting to participate in PIE appointed a five-member committee consisting of the principal, assistant principal, union steward, and two teachers selected by their peers. Grants were provided to each school to help them develop the proposals which would then be implemented by the school staff. School committees discussed restructuring the school environment and curriculum, taking into account such factors as

student attendance, discipline, social behavior, parental and community attitudes, and special needs. The proposals had to include these three elements: improving student achievement, implementing shared decision-making, and involving parents.

Dreyfuss, who is project consultant, says, "Most other programs have been top-down programs. In many cases the federal government imposes, or the state, or the district. In this case, (Partners in Education) is a program that is bottom-up. The changes are going to be made by the teachers and the principals in the school."

Some of the ideas developed by the schools: a "buddy" system where a chronically absent student is paired with one with a perfect attendance record, a fully equipped science lab, workshops to teach parents how to help their children with homework, a study hall run partly by parents, a school code of behavior, and daily typing classes to help students with reading skills.

The Urban League asked churches with predominantly black congregations to allow their facilities to be used for tutoring and study hall after normal school hours. Teachers as well as members of the individual churches were asked to volunteer to tutor students.

Another aspect of PIE is providing financial incentives to encourage student achievement and to promote higher education. One program, called "The Miami Promise," actually "promises" a college education to students who graduate from high school. The proceeds of the First Annual Superintendent's Ball, held in honor of Superintendent Fernandez, will help aid 73 students in the 1987 sixth-grade class of Drew Elementary School who graduate from high school and attend Miami-Dade Community College. The ball raised cash and pledges from the Urban League of Greater Miami, UTD, and other interested groups and individuals. Contributions were matched dollar for dollar by a grant from the Mitchell Wolfson, Sr., Foundation. The event, now an annual affair, raises additional money for the scholarship fund.

"Dollars for grades" is the motivating factor in "The Black Student Opportunity Program." Seventy-five students earn "credits" toward tuition at Miami-Dade Community College, based on their grades in English, social studies, math, and science. Rates are $30 for a "C," $60 for a "B," and $90 for an "A." Other opportunities for financial assistance will be provided for those who successfully complete the two-year program at Miami-Dade and want to obtain a four-year degree.

Saturday Morning School

One of the early successes of SBM/SDM was Saturday Morning School. The proposal was submitted by one of the PIE schools—Drew Elementary.

Frederick Morley, principal of Drew, describes how one of the school's committees came up with the idea: "The instructional program committee said, 'how can we make a difference with our children going to school the same amount of time as those who are ahead of us? We had to give them more. Let's try doing it on Saturdays. Let's invite 50 students to come on Saturday and see if we can make a difference.'"

The approach was to attract students by offering them a chance to spend their Saturday mornings at school but in a less structured and more relaxed atmosphere. There are no paperwork requirements and no formal lesson plans. The intent was to offer an educational and enjoyable alternative to Saturday morning TV by combining computer games and music instruction with more traditional class instruction.

On the first day the program was offered—September 19, 1987—200 students out of a student body of 550 showed up for class, including some pupils from surrounding schools. Reading, math, and writing have been targeted as those subjects most in need of supplemental instruction, but teachers use their own methods and innovative ideas in teaching them.

Says Morley, "These kids want to be here. The parents want them to be here. And the children are learning without discipline problems."

As interested in making this idea work as the students was the faculty. Teachers are paid the regular hourly rate with funds provided from the school's budget and a foundation grant. There was no shortage of volunteers. In addition, students from a nearby high school volunteer as tutors. While classes are in session, the Parent-Teachers Association also is holding meetings, increasing parent involvement in the program.

Within a few weeks of Drew's first Saturday Morning School session, other schools adopted the idea. Federal support also has been provided to Chapter One schools—those that are eligible for special federal funding. Seventy-nine schools currently offer Saturday Morning School, which is now nationally recognized as a way to reduce the dropout rate and improve student achievement.

Schools in the Workplace

Dade County's student population is expected to grow by some 45,000 by 1992. With this prospect looming, new ideas were needed to cope with an impending shortage of teachers and already seriously overcrowded classrooms.

Approximately 93 percent of the Dade County student body come from a one-parent family or a family with both parents working. Since many companies already operate day-care centers, why not pool resources and combine day care with public education?

This novel approach toward easing the overcrowding crunch was suggested by Superintendent Fernandez as he was

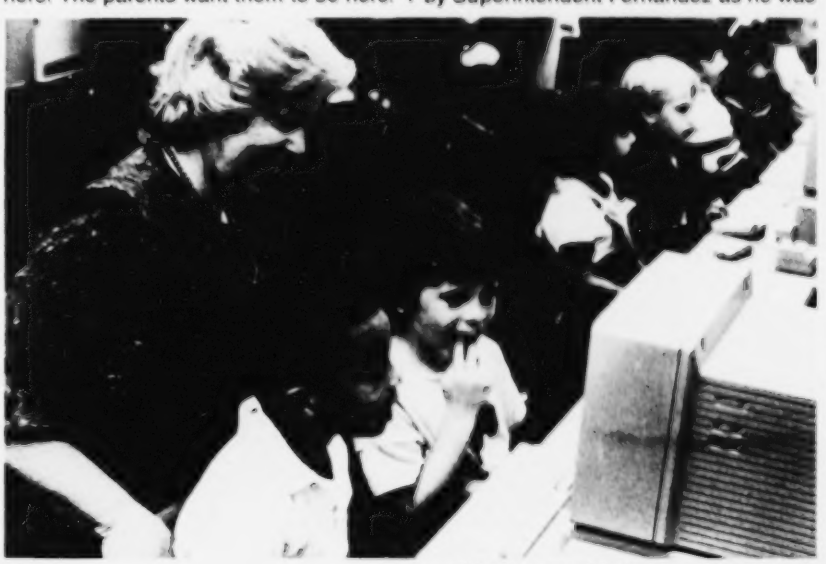

Photo Courtesy of Dade County Public Schools

Photo Courtesy of Dade County Public Schools

addressing a meeting of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce in June 1987.

The idea sparked one employer into action: R. Kirk Landon, Chief Executive Officer of the American Bankers Insurance Group, a company with approximately 1,100 employees. American Bankers already had an on-site day-care center for some 90 children, ranging in age from six weeks to kindergarten.

Shortly after Fernandez's speech, Landon called him: "I heard your concept. I like it. Let's do it."

With both Fernandez and Landon eager to set the wheels in motion for the county's first satellite learning center and with the complete cooperation of UTD, the proposal became reality within a matter of months.

While a structure was being built, which was to be known as "The Child Place," a trailer was moved to the grounds of a senior high school adjacent to American Bankers Group property. Over the 1987 Labor Day weekend, union and school administration staff prepared the site, and a group of 24 kindergarteners began classes on the first day of the school year. A lead teacher runs the school, which is a satellite of a nearby "parent" elementary school where students from the satellite center can attend assemblies and plays, and participate in other activities.

The satellite learning center provides benefits to everyone involved. For the school system, transportation costs are lowered and overcrowding is eased. Because the workplace tends to be more desegregated, the worksite school brings together children from different backgrounds and cultures. Communication between parents and teachers is improved. The center also reduces school overhead expenses for custodial care, utilities, maintenance, and security. The cost of liability insurance is shared with the company.

For the employees, school transportation worries disappear. Parents have greater access to teachers and can spend more time with their children.

For employers, an on-site school boosts morale, has the potential to lower the turnover rate, and provides a competitive hiring edge.

The students have since outgrown "The Child Place," and a new center—"La Petite Academy"—has been built. First-grade classes were added in the 1988–89 school year, with second grade to be added next year. The kindergarten class is filled each year from the day-care center.

This experiment, the first in the nation, prompted other businesses to investigate the possibility of starting similar centers. Fernandez had planned to send letters to other large companies in Dade County, but the publicity generated by the success of the American Bankers satellite school made that unnecessary.

A second satellite learning center has been opened at the Miami International Airport where approximately 36,000 work for more than 240 employers. Because of the nature of the workforce, the satellite school has an around-the-clock operation. Another center with a unique twist is the one established at the Miami-Dade Community College-North Campus. This center provides services not only for children of employees but also for children of students.

Other centers were added in the 1988–89 school year, and additional agreements are in development. Those interested include several hospitals and an industrial park with more than 50 firms.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH FOR TEACHERS

In addition to the initiatives designed to benefit students, the Professionalization of Teaching movement has resulted in a number of programs specifically designed for teachers. The goal is for teachers to reach higher levels of excellence, while helping students gain a better education in the process. The highlights of this effort are the Dade Academy for the Teaching Arts (DATA) and the Teacher Education Center.

At DATA, teachers are going back to school, but to learn—not to teach. It is unique in that DATA is planned and operated by teachers for teachers. DATA provides teachers with an opportunity to take mini-sabbaticals—to relieve them of normal teaching duties in order to pursue education and research opportunities while retaining their teaching positions.

Participation is voluntary, although certain criteria must be met for selection. Twenty secondary school teachers known as externs are chosen for one of four nine-week annual sessions. Ten resident teachers in six disciplines (math, social studies, learning disabilities, foreign languages, English, and science) serve as mentors and remain for all four sessions.

In the mornings, the mentors teach at regular schools; the externs work on individual research projects. In the afternoons, the externs attend lectures, clinics, and seminars, and exchange ideas. Teachers focus on six areas of study: critical thinking, evaluation and testing, societal factors that affect learning, computers, gender disparity, and motivation. Twenty other teachers serve as visiting professors, teaching the externs' classes while they are attending DATA. Plans are currently underway for participation to be extended to elementary school teachers in the near future.

The Teacher Education Center was established to serve as a center for teachers to keep up to date on teaching techniques and to renew their teaching certificates. The Center, at a centrally located facility, is run by a council of teachers and administrators. Courses also are offered at other locations throughout the county.

ATTRACTING THE BEST

Because of special recruitment initiatives and the successes of the

professionalization of teaching movement, the number of applicants for every teaching vacancy in Dade County has grown from two to eight. Dade County Public Schools advertises and attempts to recruit the best from the nation's colleges and universities. But they also take their recruitment efforts a step further.

Each year a national teacher-recruitment fair is held and, on being hired, new teachers receive an intensive five-day orientation. Jointly conducted by the Dade County Public Schools and UTD, orientation includes workshops on classroom management, discipline, and techniques for teaching in a multi-ethnic community.

Photo Courtesy of Dade County Public Schools

To attract students into the teaching profession, the Future Educators of America was established in each of the district's secondary schools. Now in its third year, chapters have been extended to middle and junior high schools. A teacher serves as club sponsor and oversees club activities, directs members on field trips, and conducts seminars and workshops. Those club members who go on to teaching careers and return to Dade County are given preferential treatment in hiring. Scholarships also are available for students who meet certain criteria upon graduating from high school. An additional incentive more recently established is the "signing bonus," which is available to graduating college seniors who accept positions in Dade County Public Schools.

In order to avert a teacher shortage, Dade County Public Schools launched the Teacher Recruitment and Internship Program (TRIP), in partnership with UTD and the University of Miami. College graduates who do not have education degrees are recruited and trained to become teachers and then hired in Dade County. A TRIP participant teaches and plans classes under the supervision of a mentor teacher. Upon completion of a 12- to 18-month training program, these individuals will meet all of the requirements for a teaching certificate.

ON THE CUTTING EDGE

The Professionalization of Teaching movement, grounded in the 1970s, and the environment in the Dade County Public Schools has encouraged teachers and administrators to continue to work together to improve the schools.

The SBM/SDM process recently has been applied to an entire area or neighborhood of some 60 schools. This new plan means that teachers, administrators, parents, community representatives, and students together make education decisions, and plan and implement them.

The new three-year teachers' contract continues to build on the Professionalization of Teaching efforts. The contract permits certain teachers to earn as much as $64,000 by the 1990–91 school year, and teacher salaries will increase an average of 28 percent over the next three years.

Says Tornillo, "Our landmark labor contract sends a clear message—teachers are professionals." And the proof is in the contract, which includes an article specifically devoted to Professionalization of Teaching. Highlights include:

- Selecting a second group of schools in the SBM/SDM program,
- Involving teachers in planning and designing new schools,
- Establishing a pilot Career Achievement Program for teachers, based on performance, professional growth, and financial incentives,
- Expanding the Dade Academy for the Teaching Arts to include elementary school teachers, and
- Establishing a professional leave bank so teachers may "borrow" leave to attend conferences, meetings, and courses.

The original Professionalization of Teaching Task Force has been reorganized with a new role—that of reviewing the progress of all professional initiatives and planning for future efforts.

The Task Force makes recommendations for new or modified programs. The Planning and Oversight Subcommittee issues progress reports and also reviews requests for waivers under the SBM/SDM program.

Because of the phenomenal growth in Dade County's professionalization movement, the Bureau of Professionalization Programs and Operations was established. The Bureau oversees all professionalization initiatives throughout the school system and is responsible for planning, coordinating, and distributing information on the various programs.

Another important function is supervision of the SBM/SDM programs and DATA, and providing technical assistance and support.

On the union side, a new Department of Professionalization was created within UTD. The Department provides technical assistance and support for the reform initiatives. In addition, the union established a Future Leaders Training Program in which union members are groomed for leadership roles.

The full potential of the Professionalization of Teaching movement in the Dade County Public Schools has yet to be realized, as each year new initiatives are begun and old ones changed or expanded. The cooperation between union and management has never waivered.

The education reform movement has not been without risks and the possibility of failure. But the leadership on both sides agree that the risks have been worth it.

Warns Tornillo, "There's just no way to find out if this is going to work without doing it. If you want to be safe, you shouldn't take the first step in this whole professionalization movement, because there's nothing safe about it."

Superintendent Fernandez concludes: "My role is to provide the best education I can to the children of this district. If one way to do that is through a better working relationship with the union, then I'm all for it. We dare to dream, to take risks. That has put Dade County on the edge of education reform."

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